

Live & Learn

Lifelong learning is defined as learning that continues throughout a person's lifetime. The learning that takes place can range from the most highly formal and structured activities to the most informal modes of learning. Lifelong learning can be provided in a variety of learning styles and approaches. It can be either "taught" or "non-taught" learning.

Lifelong Learning and Your Future

Why Lifelong Learning?

Motivation for learning in the first place is primarily job or employment related. In the future, companies will seek knowledgeable workers who take responsibility for their own professional development. Lifelong learning will become a must for workers of the future. Effective lifelong learning is a key element to being successful. Most of us wish to learn things to help us improve ourselves, but we don't always use the most effective methods to do so.

Why and How to Participate in Lifelong Learning

Establish A Personal Plan

- Set career milestones and review them yearly.
- Decide which skills are the most important for advancement and focus on what it is you need to learn them.
- Write your goals down and prioritize your learning--having written goals will help you focus.
- Identify learning opportunities.
- Seek out good learning situations--these need not be formal classroom settings.
- Make a commitment to lifelong learning. Don't make the mistake of relying just on employers for training--there's a lot you can learn on your own.



Questions for Assessing Yourself

Here's a few questions to ask yourself to start your self-assessment. Analyze your skills at work, on a committee, or as part of an organization. Do you do these things *Always, Frequently, Occasionally, Seldom, or Never?*

1. Do I take steps to keep my technical skills updated?
2. Am I familiar with the technology tools of the "office of the future?"
3. Do I possess the skills or ability to lead (form teams and encourage participation from members)?
4. Am I a problem solver (can I identify "roadblocks" that impede the work flow and come up with a solution)?
5. Do I utilize strong organizational skills (such as time management)?
6. Do I possess the qualities of a professional (display diplomacy, courtesy and honesty in various situations)?
7. Am I flexible and innovative (being open to new approaches, even if I believe my way is best)?
8. Do I offer new ideas?
9. Do I possess persuasion and negotiation skills (can I negotiate or persuade others when necessary)?

- If most of your answers are *Always* or *Frequently*, you have confidence in your skills. Embrace the concept of lifelong learning by keeping pace with new trends in your field.
- If most of your answers are *Seldom* or *Never*, you may have doubts about your skills. Take a proactive approach and explore learning options.
- If your answers are a little of everything, you may be uncertain about your skill level. Try taking exploratory classes or attending some workshops to determine the knowledge you are lacking.

Determine what it would take to improve your skills: do some research, join user groups, attend professional seminars, or read articles by experts in your career or industry.

- Keep your technical skills updated and constantly develop your interpersonal skills.

Self-Assessment

A *self-assessment* is a way to enhance self-understanding. It is being able to describe your unique characteristics and abilities clearly and accurately **regarding**

- What you do well (skills)
- What is important to you (values)
- What you like to do (interests)

Reviewing and analyzing your past and present experiences will increase self-understanding. Increasing your knowledge of your skills, values, and interest will help determine what you should focus on learning.

Self-assessment tools are available from several places. Your school will likely have them available. Check with your guidance office/career advisor.

Your local NH Employment Security Office has a Resource Center with many free tools for your benefit. There are thirteen offices throughout the state--call your nearest office or stop in (See location address information on page 3).

Source: <http://www.nv.cc.va.us/home/dterry/lifelonglearning/dogwood.htm#DEF>

Lifelong Learning is Something to Think About

We need to move beyond the 2 x 4 x 6 school. Beyond the 2 covers of the book, the 4 walls of the classroom, the 6 hours of the day.

— Mary Hatwood Futrell

Opening Doors

Self-reliance and a positive attitude are your keys to finding good opportunities and making career choices that will be right for you and provide you with rewarding experiences in the world of work. You can't go wrong if you:

1. Think about life as an adventure filled with exciting unknowns.
2. Look for the positive in every situation. What's the plus? Where's the opportunity?
3. Know what you want in life. Don't go for the quick fix. Stay true to your values and beliefs.
4. Know your strengths.
5. Identify your weaknesses and

- know that they are only limitations, not flaws.
6. Build on your strengths and find ways to reduce your limitations.
7. Learn from your mistakes. Think what you will do differently the next time.
8. Learn to speak up for yourself and verbalize what you want.

<http://www.oohmi.net/pub/CARCOMP2003.pdf>

Career Skills

Assess the skills you have--and determine the skills you need--to find careers that match your abilities.

You may have already learned to:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| * manage time | * motivate people | * be accurate |
| * make good decisions | * analyze data | * understand quickly |
| * communicate well | * write clearly | * be enthusiastic |
| * evaluate information | * be efficient | * be flexible |
| * organize | * be reliable | * solve problems |